

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL
(Large Entity)

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR 1.53(b))

Docket No.
13768.132

Total Pages in this Submission

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTSBox Patent Application
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Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR GATHERING, ORGANIZING AND EXECUTING TEST CASES

and invented by:

Damon Barry
Greg Veith
Brent Jensen
Frank TruongIf a **CONTINUATION APPLICATION**, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information:☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____

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Enclosed are:

Application Elements

1. ☐ Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. ☒ Specification having 28 pages and including the following:
 - a. ☒ Descriptive Title of the Invention
 - b. ☐ Cross References to Related Applications (if applicable)
 - c. ☐ Statement Regarding Federally-sponsored Research/Development (if applicable)
 - d. ☐ Reference to Microfiche Appendix (if applicable)
 - e. ☒ Background of the Invention
 - f. ☒ Brief Summary of the Invention
 - g. ☒ Brief Description of the Drawings (if drawings filed)
 - h. ☒ Detailed Description
 - i. ☒ Claim(s) as Classified Below
 - j. ☒ Abstract of the Disclosure

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Application Elements (Continued)

3. ☒ Drawing(s) *(when necessary as prescribed by 35 USC 113)*
- a. ☒ Formal Number of Sheets 4
- b. ☐ Informal Number of Sheets _____
4. ☒ Oath or Declaration
- a. ☐ Newly executed *(original or copy)* ☐ Unexecuted
- b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d)) *(for continuation/divisional application only)*
- c. ☒ With Power of Attorney ☐ Without Power of Attorney
- d. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application,
see 37 C.F.R. 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
5. ☐ Incorporation By Reference *(usable if Box 4b is checked)*
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is supplied under
Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby
incorporated by reference therein.
6. ☐ Computer Program in Microfiche *(Appendix)*
7. ☐ Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission *(if applicable, all must be included)*
- a. ☐ Paper Copy
- b. ☐ Computer Readable Copy *(identical to computer copy)*
- c. ☐ Statement Verifying Identical Paper and Computer Readable Copy

Accompanying Application Parts

8. ☒ Assignment Papers *(cover sheet & document(s))*
9. ☐ 37 CFR 3.73(B) Statement *(when there is an assignee)*
10. ☐ English Translation Document *(if applicable)*
11. ☐ Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
12. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
13. ☒ Acknowledgment postcard
14. ☒ Certificate of Mailing
- ☐ First Class ☒ Express Mail *(Specify Label No.):* EL358763279US

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Accompanying Application Parts (Continued)

15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) *(if foreign priority is claimed)*

16. ☒ Additional Enclosures *(please identify below):*

Correspondence Instructions

Fee Calculation and Transmittal

CLAIMS AS FILED

For	#Filed	#Allowed	#Extra	Rate	Fee
Total Claims	27	- 20 =	7	x \$18.00	\$126.00
Indep. Claims	4	- 3 =	1	x \$78.00	\$78.00
Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/>					\$0.00
BASIC FEE					\$760.00
OTHER FEE (specify purpose)					\$0.00
TOTAL FILING FEE					\$964.00

- ☒ A check in the amount of **\$964.00** to cover the filing fee is enclosed.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and credit Deposit Account No. **23-3178** as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.
- ☐ Charge the amount of _____ as filing fee.
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- ☒ Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.
- ☐ Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.311(b).

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Dated: June 30, 2000

cc:

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

Damon Barry

Greg Veith

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and

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for

**SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR
GATHERING, ORGANIZING AND EXECUTING TEST CASES**

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. The Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to systems and methods for gathering, organizing and executing test cases irrespective of the language or format employed. More specifically, the present invention relates to systems and methods that organize a hierarchy comprising test cases, test suites and test modules, traverse the hierarchy to run selected test cases on developed software packages to identify erroneous logic, and execute test cases on multiple threads in various scenarios.

2. The Prior State of the Art

Once a computer program has been developed, it is customary to identify and resolve any erroneous logic that was introduced during the stage of writing the program. The erroneous logic is referred to as a “bug” and includes invalid data or instructions that cause a division by zero or misdirect the computer to the wrong place in the program. Bugs cause a program to provide invalid output that may or may not result in the program crashing. Therefore, extensive testing of a newly developed computer program is required to identify any erroneous logic in the program.

One manner of testing a newly developed computer program is by applying a series of related steps, referred to as a “test case,” designed to test an aspect or feature of the developed computer program. This manner of testing is referred to as automated or programmatic testing. The test cases are repeatedly executed on the computer program by a set of instructions known as a “harness.”

Each time a computer program is tested programmatically, a new or modified harness is written to execute developed test cases on the computer program. Within teams

1 of program testers it is common to use many different harnesses, each having been
2 developed and maintained to service a narrow set of test cases. The developed harnesses are
3 hard-coded to the specific language and format of the developed programs and/or test cases.
4 Furthermore, the harnesses are frequently written in line with the test cases, causing writers
5 of test cases to learn the challenging task of separating the code of the test cases from the
6 code of the harness. Further still, harnesses are often inextricably tied to the user interface
7 they expose so that a user of a harness is only provided one way to control the harness and to
8 view the results.

9 As such, computer programmers currently spend large amounts of time writing or
10 modifying a harness after a new computer program has been developed so that the newly
11 developed program can be tested. The large amounts of time required to develop each
12 harness have resulted in less time testing the developed program. Moreover, since each
13 harness is customized for a narrow set of test cases, a great proliferation of customized test
14 harnesses hard-coded to the specific language and format of the developed program and/or
15 test case currently exist in the area of software development and testing. As a result,
16 computer program testers have found the large number of test harnesses to be very difficult
17 to manage.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to systems and methods for gathering, organizing and executing test cases irrespective of the language or format employed. More specifically, the present invention relates to systems and methods that organize a hierarchy comprising test cases, test suites and test modules, traverse the hierarchy to run selected test cases on developed software packages to identify erroneous logic, and execute test cases on multiple threads in various scenarios.

Embodiments of the present invention include interposing a set of instructions, known as a harness, between a software package and a program module to test the software package for erroneous logic. The harness and program module are connected through the use of a connector, which includes one or more interfaces. In one embodiment, a user writes an individual connector for connecting a program module to the harness. In another embodiment, the connector is predefined within the harness. The connector extracts one or more test cases from the program module irrespective of the language or format employed. Each test case is a series of related steps designed to test an aspect or feature of the developed software package. The harness receives the extracted test cases, which are organized by the connector into a hierarchy that comprises one or more sets of test cases, known as "test suites," and one or more sets of test suites, known as "test modules."

The harness and connector utilize architecture that defines a means for accessing objects, functions, or other resources over a network, such as, by way of example, component object model ("COM") technology, Corba technology ("Corba"), and the like. Therefore, a programmer can employ any language or format for developing the program module so long as a means for accessing resources over a network is defined.

1 To illustrate the concept of a connector, the harness may include a component that
2 can be called up and executed to extract test case information from the program module to
3 create the hierarchy. The connector component scans the program module and creates the
4 hierarchy by causing the program module to become a test module, a class within the
5 program module to become a test suite, and a method within a class to become a test case.
6 Properties within a class are ignored for purposes of creating the hierarchy.

7 The harness traverses the hierarchy to run selected test cases to identify erroneous
8 logic in the software package. Each traversal of the hierarchy is referred to as a "test pass."
9 A user enables or disables elements of the created hierarchy to test specific aspects or
10 features of the developed software package. The elements are identified as being enabled,
11 or alternatively disabled, by the use of a flag or similar indicator. The harness traverses the
12 hierarchy, locates the selected test cases, and executes the selected test cases.

13 The harness also allows a user to specify parameters for each test pass. By way of
14 example, a user can define the number of times to repeat each test case, test suite, and/or test
15 module, the number of threads to run on, and so forth. Moreover, the harness has the ability
16 to execute test cases on multiple threads in various situations.

17 The harness identifies the state of a test case in the hierarchy. By way of example,
18 the state of a test case may be identified as "not run," "in progress," "passed," or "failed."
19 The state of a test case may be reported through events that are sent asynchronously to the
20 user. The user may instantly receive information about changes to the test cases of the
21 hierarchy through the use of a client interface.

22 The harness is passive. It defines one or more interfaces that allow users to drive its
23 functions. The interfaces define functions, which may be called by the users, that drive the
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harness. The functions are not performed unless the users utilize the interfaces to create a client application. The results and controls are displayed in any manner desired by the users.

Therefore, in accordance with the present invention, and without regard to the language or format employed, a hierarchy is organized and traversed to run selected test cases on developed software packages to identify erroneous logic and test cases are executed on multiple threads in various scenarios. Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the description which follows, and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by the practice of the invention. The features and advantages of the invention may be realized and obtained by means of the instruments and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims. These and other features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of the invention as set forth hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order that the manner in which the above-recited and other advantages and features of the invention are obtained, a more particular description of the invention briefly described above will be rendered by reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. Understanding that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are not therefore to be considered to be limiting of its scope, the invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 illustrates an exemplary system that provides a suitable operating environment for the present invention;

Figure 2 is a block diagram that illustrates an exemplary configuration for practicing the present invention, where a harness is interposed between a software application and a program module for interpreting the program module and organizing a testing hierarchy;

Figure 3 is a block diagram that illustrates an exemplary configuration for practicing the present invention, where the harness of Figure 2 traverses the testing hierarchy to run selected test cases on the software application;

Figure 4A illustrates multiple streams of test case execution that are applied in a parallel processing fashion to a software application; and

Figure 4B illustrates multiple streams of test case execution that are applied in a round robin processing fashion to a software application.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention extends to both systems and methods for gathering, organizing and executing test cases irrespective of the language or format employed. More specifically, the present invention relates to systems and methods that organize a hierarchy comprising test cases, test suites and test modules, traverse the hierarchy to run selected test cases on developed software packages to identify erroneous logic, and execute test cases on multiple threads in various scenarios. The embodiments of the present invention may comprise a special purpose or general purpose computer including various computer hardware, as discussed in greater detail below.

Throughout the following disclosure, reference is made to the execution of test cases on developed software packages through the use of a harness. In the disclosure and in the claims the term "test case" refers to a series of related steps designed to test an aspect or feature of the developed software package. Similarly, the term "harness" refers to a set of instructions for executing one or more test cases on the developed software package.

The disclosure also references a testing hierarchy that includes test cases, test suites, and test modules. In the disclosure and in the claims a "test suite" refers to a set of one or more test cases and a "test module" refers to a set of one or more test suites. Moreover, a "test pass" refers to the execution of one or more test cases, test suites, and/or test modules.

Embodiments within the scope of the present invention include computer-readable media for carrying or having computer-executable instructions or data structures stored thereon. Such computer-readable media can be any available media that can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer. By way of example, and not limitation, such computer-readable media can comprise RAM, ROM, EEPROM, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium

1 which can be used to carry or store desired program code means in the form of computer-
2 executable instructions or data structures and which can be accessed by a general purpose or
3 special purpose computer. When information is transferred or provided over a network or
4 another communications connection (either hardwired, wireless, or a combination of
5 hardwired or wireless) to a computer, the computer properly views the connection as a
6 computer-readable medium. Thus, any such a connection is properly termed a computer-
7 readable medium. Combinations of the above should also be included within the scope of
8 computer-readable media. Computer-executable instructions comprise, for example,
9 instructions and data which cause a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or
10 special purpose processing device to perform a certain function or group of functions.

11 Figure 1 and the following discussion are intended to provide a brief, general
12 description of a suitable computing environment in which the invention may be
13 implemented. Although not required, the invention will be described in the general context
14 of computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, being executed by
15 computers in network environments. Generally, program modules include routines,
16 programs, objects, components, data structures, etc. that perform particular tasks or
17 implement particular abstract data types. Computer-executable instructions, associated data
18 structures, and program modules represent examples of the program code means for
19 executing steps of the methods disclosed herein. The particular sequence of such executable
20 instructions or associated data structures represents examples of corresponding acts for
21 implementing the functions described in such steps.

22 Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may be practiced in
23 network computing environments with many types of computer system configurations,
24 including personal computers, hand-held devices, multi-processor systems, microprocessor-

1 based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe
2 computers, and the like. The invention may also be practiced in distributed computing
3 environments where tasks are performed by local and remote processing devices that are
4 linked (either by hardwired links, wireless links, or by a combination of hardwired or
5 wireless links) through a communications network. In a distributed computing environment,
6 program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage devices.

7 With reference to Figure 1, an exemplary system for implementing the invention
8 includes a general purpose computing device in the form of a conventional computer 20,
9 including a processing unit 21, a system memory 22, and a system bus 23 that couples
10 various system components including the system memory 22 to the processing unit 21. The
11 system bus 23 may be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or
12 memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus
13 architectures. The system memory includes read only memory (ROM) 24 and random
14 access memory (RAM) 25. A basic input/output system (BIOS) 26, containing the basic
15 routines that help transfer information between elements within the computer 20, such as
16 during start-up, may be stored in ROM 24.

17 The computer 20 may also include a magnetic hard disk drive 27 for reading from
18 and writing to a magnetic hard disk 39, a magnetic disk drive 28 for reading from or writing
19 to a removable magnetic disk 29, and an optical disk drive 30 for reading from or writing to
20 removable optical disk 31 such as a CD-ROM or other optical media. The magnetic hard
21 disk drive 27, magnetic disk drive 28, and optical disk drive 30 are connected to the system
22 bus 23 by a hard disk drive interface 32, a magnetic disk drive-interface 33, and an optical
23 drive interface 34, respectively. The drives and their associated computer-readable media
24 provide nonvolatile storage of computer-executable instructions, data structures, program

1 modules and other data for the computer 20. Although the exemplary environment
2 described herein employs a magnetic hard disk 39, a removable magnetic disk 29 and a
3 removable optical disk 31, other types of computer readable media for storing data can be
4 used, including magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, Bernoulli
5 cartridges, RAMs, ROMs, and the like.

6 Program code means comprising one or more program modules may be stored on the
7 hard disk 39, magnetic disk 29, optical disk 31, ROM 24 or RAM 25, including an operating
8 system 35, one or more application programs 36, other program modules 37, and program
9 data 38. A user may enter commands and information into the computer 20 through
10 keyboard 40, pointing device 42, or other input devices (not shown), such as a microphone,
11 joy stick, game pad, satellite dish, scanner, or the like. These and other input devices are
12 often connected to the processing unit 21 through a serial port interface 46 coupled to
13 system bus 23. Alternatively, the input devices may be connected by other interfaces, such
14 as a parallel port, a game port or a universal serial bus (USB). A monitor 47 or another
15 display device is also connected to system bus 23 via an interface, such as video adapter 48.
16 In addition to the monitor, personal computers typically include other peripheral output
17 devices (not shown), such as speakers and printers.

18 The computer 20 may operate in a networked environment using logical connections
19 to one or more remote computers, such as remote computers 49a and 49b. Remote
20 computers 49a and 49b may each be another personal computer, a server, a router, a network
21 PC, a peer device or other common network node, and typically includes many or all of the
22 elements described above relative to the computer 20, although only memory storage
23 devices 50a and 50b and their associated application programs 36a and 36b have been
24 illustrated in Figure 1. The logical connections depicted in Figure 1 include a local area

1 network (LAN) 51 and a wide area network (WAN) 52 that are presented here by way of
2 example and not limitation. Such networking environments are commonplace in office-
3 wide or enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets and the Internet.

4 When used in a LAN networking environment, the computer 20 is connected to the
5 local network 51 through a network interface or adapter 53. When used in a WAN
6 networking environment, the computer 20 may include a modem 54, a wireless link, or other
7 means for establishing communications over the wide area network 52, such as the Internet.
8 The modem 54, which may be internal or external, is connected to the system bus 23 via the
9 serial port interface 46. In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to
10 the computer 20, or portions thereof, may be stored in the remote memory storage device. It
11 will be appreciated that the network connections shown are exemplary and other means of
12 establishing communications over wide area network 52 may be used.

13 The system illustrated in Figure 1 provides an exemplary operating environment for
14 identifying erroneous logic in accordance with the present invention. An exemplary
15 structure for the present invention is created by interposing a harness between a software
16 package, such as one of the application programs 36, and a program module, such as one of
17 the program modules 37. Erroneous logic present in the software package is identified by
18 executing the harness, which utilizes a connector to extract one or more test cases from the
19 program module, receives an organized hierarchy from the connector that comprises test
20 cases, test suites and test modules, and traverses the hierarchy to run selected test cases to
21 identify erroneous logic in the software package, as will be detailed below.

22 Referring to Figure 2, a harness 62 is interposed between a software package,
23 illustrated as client application program 60, and a program module 76 for explanation
24

1 purposes only. The harness exposes data structures, properties, and methods as will be
2 further described below.

3 A client application, illustrated in Figure 2 as harness client 61, is developed by the
4 user to drive the harness. Harness client 61 uses a connector to extract one or more test
5 cases from the program module 76, irrespective of the language or format employed. The
6 harness receives the extracted test cases as an organized hierarchy, which may include one
7 or more test suites and test modules.

8 Client application program 60 is a developed software package that is ready to be
9 tested for erroneous logic. The testing occurs upon utilizing harness 62 through harness
10 client 61. Harness 62 utilizes architecture that defines a means for accessing one or more
11 resources over a network. In the disclosure and in the claims the use of the term "resource"
12 also encompasses an object, a function, or the like. COM technology, Corba, and the like
13 are examples of such means for accessing one or more resources over a network, as will be
14 discussed below.

15 Program module 76 is connected to harness 62 through connector 67 and is written
16 to test specific aspects or features of client application program 60. Similar to harness 62,
17 connector 67 utilizes architecture that defines a means for accessing resources over a
18 network, such as, by way of example, COM technology. As such, a programmer can
19 employ any language or format for developing program module 76 so long as a means for
20 accessing resources over a network is defined in connector 67.

21 Program module 76 is, by way of example, an executable software module that
22 performs some function and is called by a running application to provide additional
23 functionality. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2, program module 76 is an ActiveX
24 dynamic link library ("DLL"), which includes one or more user-defined data types that

1 define a collection of objects having similar characteristics. The data types can be referred
2 to as “classes” and are illustrated as components 78 and 88. While classes are generally
3 defined as declarations of data structures in the software module code, running instances of a
4 class in volatile computer memory are called objects, which contain data and provide
5 methods and properties for accessing and operating on the data. By way of example,
6 component 78 includes method 80, method 82, property 84 and property 86. Similarly,
7 component 88 includes method 90, method 92, property 94 and property 96.

8 Harness 62 and program module 76 are connected through the use of a connector,
9 illustrated as connector 67. In one embodiment, a user is able to write an individual
10 interface for connecting a program module to the harness. In another embodiment, the
11 connecting interface is predefined within the harness.

12 In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2, connector 67 is predefined within harness
13 62 and uses COM technology to expose two classes, illustrated as extraction component 68
14 and test case component 72. Test case component 72 implements methods 65 and properties
15 66 of test case declaration 64. Because test case component 72 implements test case
16 declaration 64, the harness can execute the properties and methods on test case component
17 72, and object instances of the component can be inserted into the test hierarchy. Test case
18 component 72 may also employ additional interfaces, properties and methods to
19 communicate with program module 76. By way of example, a property (not shown) within
20 test case component 72 is set to the program identification of a component of program
21 module 76 that implements a test case as a method.

22 Extraction component 68 can be called up and executed to extract test cases from
23 program module 76. In an embodiment of the present invention, extraction component 68 is
24 a COM class that is used to extract test case information from program module 76 to create a

1 hierarchy. Extraction component 68 scans program module 76 and creates the hierarchy
2 whereby a program module becomes a test module, a class becomes a test suite, and a
3 method becomes a test case. Properties within a class are ignored for purposes of creating
4 the hierarchy.

5 Figure 3 provides an example of extraction component 68 scanning program module
6 76 of Figure 2 and creating a hierarchy that includes test cases, test suites, and test modules.
7 In the hierarchy illustrated in Figure 3, test module 76A corresponds to program module 76
8 of Figure 2 and comprises test suites 78A and 88A. Test suite 78A corresponds to
9 component 78 of Figure 2 and includes test cases 80A and 82A, which respectively
10 correspond to methods 80 and 82 of Figure 2. Similarly, test suite 88A corresponds to
11 component 88 of Figure 2 and comprises test cases 90A and 92A, which respectively
12 correspond to methods 90 and 92 of Figure 2. As such, each method becomes an individual
13 test case that is used to test a particular aspect or feature of client application program 60.

14 Returning to Figure 2, harness client 61 performs the functions of extracting test case
15 information from program module 76 and creating a hierarchy by employing one or more
16 methods 69 and/or properties 70. One of the properties 70 is a search property that sets a
17 safe array filled with the names of binaries (i.e. activeX DLLs and executables) that make up
18 the hierarchy. In accordance with the present embodiment, a user is required to provide
19 filenames for the search property.

20 A second property 70 is a test module property that points to a test module object
21 that extraction component 68 created from the binaries that the user specified for the search
22 property. The test module property is passed to harness 62 and a copy is made for executing
23 a test pass, as will be further explained below.

1 Methods 69 include a scan method that looks through a registry to find each binary
2 that the user specified for the search property. If, by way of example, a binary contains one
3 or more COM components in the registry, the scan method co-creates a new test module
4 object and adds the new test module object to a collection of test modules for each binary
5 that the scan method finds in the registry. The name of the binary found by the scan method
6 is used to populate the test module's name property. The scan method also co-creates a new
7 test suite object for each class found in test module 76. Each new test suite object is added
8 to the test module for the parent binary.

9 In Figure 3, harness client 61 employs connector 67 to create the hierarchy. Harness
10 client 61 then passes the hierarchy to harness 62, which receives the hierarchy, traverses the
11 hierarchy, and executes test cases. Each traversal of the hierarchy is referred to as a "test
12 pass." Harness 62 includes various properties and methods (not shown) to perform these
13 functions. By way of example: A distribute property distributes test cases on available
14 threads in a thread pool; A running property indicates whether harness 62 is traversing the
15 hierarchy or is idle; A repeat enabled property toggles repeat functionality by selectively
16 examining a repeat iteration property, which identifies the number of times to perform a
17 function, and a repeat scope property, which identifies the scope at which to repeat; A start
18 method is called by harness client 61 to inform harness 62 to begin a test pass; A stop
19 method is called by harness client 61 to abort execution of a test pass; A test module
20 property retains a copy of the hierarchy passed to the start method by extraction component
21 68; A thread count property allows a user to set the number of threads to be used in the
22 thread pool to perform a test pass; And a timeout property allows a user to set a value in
23 minutes, upon which a monitoring thread will kill a thread that exceeds the timeout value.
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1 Therefore, harness client 61 employs connector 67 and harness 62 to traverse the
2 hierarchy and run selected test cases for identifying erroneous logic in the software package.
3 A user enables or disables elements of the created hierarchy to test specified aspects or
4 features of the developed software package. The elements are identified as being enabled,
5 or alternatively disabled, by the use of a flag or similar indicator. Harness 62 traverses the
6 hierarchy in order to locate and execute the one or more selected test cases, test suites,
7 and/or test modules.

8 By way of example, and with reference to Figure 3, a user may desire to have test
9 cases 80A, 82A, and 90A executed on client application program 60. As such, a user can
10 disable test case 92A so that during a test pass all test cases are executed by harness 62 on
11 client application program 60 except for test case 92A. This causes harness 62 to execute
12 test cases 80A, 82A, and 90A on client application program 60.

13 Alternatively, the user can enable test suite 78A and test case 90. Since a test suite is
14 a set of one or more test cases, enabling test suite 78A is identical to enabling all of the test
15 cases within the set defined by test suite 78A, namely test cases 80A and 82A, unless test
16 cases 80A and 82A have been explicitly disabled by the user. Therefore, during the test pass
17 the harness executes test cases 80A, 82A, and 90A on client application program 60.

18 Similarly, if a user desires to have test cases 80A, 82A, 90A and 92A executed on
19 client application program 60, the user can enable test module 76A. Assuming the user has
20 not explicitly disabled test cases 80A, 82A, 90A or 92A, and because a test module is a set
21 of one or more test suites and each test suite is a set of one or more test cases, enabling a test
22 module would be the same as enabling each of the underlying test cases individually.
23 Therefore, enabling test module 76A enables test suites 78A and 88A, which in turn enables
24

1 test cases 80A, 82A, 90A and 92A. As such, during a test pass harness 62 executes test
2 cases 80A, 82A, 90A and 92A on client application program 60.

3 Harness 62 also allows a user to specify parameters for each test pass. By way of
4 example, a user can define the number of times to repeat each test case, test suite, and/or test
5 module, the number of threads to run on, and so forth. Moreover, the harness has the ability
6 to execute test cases on multiple threads in various situations.

7 Figures 4A and 4B provide, by way of example, the ability of the harness to execute
8 test cases on multiple threads of a thread pool. A property of the harness 67 of Figure 3 can
9 be set to distribute test cases among one or more threads of a thread pool in order to execute
10 the test cases on client application program 60. By way of example, when the distribute
11 property is set to false each test case is executed across all threads of the thread pool and is
12 run by all of the threads at the same time. Alternatively, when the distribute property of
13 harness 62 is set to true, the next available test case in the hierarchy is pipelined through the
14 thread pool to maximize throughput.

15 Referring first to Figure 4A, an example is provided on cloning test cases, which
16 occurs, by way of example, when the distribute property is set to false. In the embodiment
17 illustrated in Figure 4A, test cases 100 are the test cases obtained from a test pass that are to
18 be executed on a software package and include test cases 104, 106, 108, and 110. In the
19 illustrated embodiment four threads are in the thread pool. Threads 102 indicate the threads
20 upon which each of the test cases 100 will begin running. In the illustrated embodiment,
21 one of the test cases 100 is taken at a time, is copied across all threads in the thread pool and
22 is executed across all of the threads. Therefore, by way of example, if test cases 104, 106,
23 108, and 110 are selected for execution on the software package and the thread count was
24 four, then test case 104 is copied across all four threads and then is executed across all four

1 threads. Next, test case 106 is copied across all four threads and then is executed across all
2 four threads. Test case 108 is then copied across all four threads and is executed across all
3 four threads. This process is continued until all of the selected test cases have been executed
4 on the software package.

5 Alternatively, Figure 4B provides an example of applying the selected test cases in a
6 round-robin fashion on the threads, which occurs, by way of example, when the distribute
7 property of harness 62 of Figure 3 is set to true. In Figure 4B, test cases 120 are the test
8 cases obtained from a test pass that are to be executed on a software package and include
9 test cases 124, 126, 128, and 130. In the illustrated embodiment four threads are in the
10 thread pool. Threads 122 indicate the thread number upon which each of the test cases 100
11 will begin to run. In the illustrated embodiment, each of the threads is taken individually
12 and is used to run a different test case. Therefore, by way of example, if test cases 124, 126,
13 128, and 130 are selected for execution on the software package and the thread count was
14 four, then test case 124 runs on thread 1, test case 126 runs on thread 2, test case 128 runs on
15 thread 3, and test case 130 runs on thread 4.

16 Therefore, in accordance with the present invention, test cases are extracted from a
17 program module, a hierarchy is organized that comprises test cases, test suites and test
18 modules, the hierarchy is traversed by a generic harness which is driven by a harness client
19 to run selected test cases on developed software packages to identify erroneous logic, test
20 cases are executed on multiple threads in various scenarios, and the results of the execution
21 are immediately reported back to the user. The present invention may be embodied in other
22 specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described
23 embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The
24 scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the

1 foregoing description. All changes that come within the meaning and range of equivalency
2 of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.

3 What is claimed and desired to be secured by United States Letters Patent is:
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1 1. A selectively adaptable computer system for testing a computer program to
2 ensure that the program processes as designed, the system comprising:

3 one or more test cases, wherein each of the test cases is a set of instructions
4 for testing a feature of the computer program;

5 a harness, wherein the harness is a set of instructions that executes each of the
6 test cases on the computer program;

7 a connector, wherein the connector is a set of instructions that selectively
8 integrates a generic interface between the one or more test cases and the harness
9 regardless of the language or format in which the test cases were written; and

10 a processor for executing the one or more test cases, the harness and the
11 connector.

12
13 2. A selectively adaptable computer system as recited in claim 1, wherein the
14 set of instructions of the harness and the set of instructions of the connector utilize an
15 architecture that defines a means for accessing a resource over a network.

16
17 3. A selectively adaptable computer system as recited in claim 2, wherein the
18 architecture is COM technology.

1 4. In a computer system that includes a processor, a computer program, one or
2 more connectors, a program module, and a harness, a method for testing the computer
3 program to determine whether the program processes as designed, the method comprising
4 the steps for:

5 organizing one or more test cases into a hierarchy;
6 interfacing a harness with the test cases, wherein the interfacing allows the
7 harness to recognize and execute the test cases; and
8 traversing the hierarchy to execute on a computer program one or more test
9 cases selected by a user, wherein the selected test cases are executed on the computer
10 program regardless of the language or format in which the test cases were written.

11
12 5. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the step for traversing is performed
13 by the harness.

14
15 6. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the step for interfacing is performed
16 by the one or more connectors.

17
18 7. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the method further includes the step
19 for determining whether one or more of the test cases are identified as being deselected,
20 wherein a deselected test case is not executed on the computer program.

21
22 8. A method as recited in claim 7, wherein one or more test cases comprise a
23 test suite in the hierarchy.
24

1
2 9. A method as recited in claim 8, wherein one or more test suites comprise a
3 test module in the hierarchy.
4

5 10. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein upon the user selecting a test suite,
6 the one or more test cases that comprise the test suite, excluding any test cases determined to
7 be deselected are selected.
8

9 11. A method as recited in claim 10, wherein upon the user selecting a test
10 module, the one or more test suites that comprise the test module, excluding any test cases
11 determined to be deselected are selected.
12

13 12. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the step for traversing further
14 includes executing the selected test cases on a thread pool comprising of one or more
15 threads.
16

17 13. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the step for traversing further
18 includes copying a selected test case across all of the one or more threads, and wherein the
19 selected test case is executed across all of the one or more threads.
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21 14. A method as recited in claim 12, wherein the step for traversing further
22 includes executing one of the selected test case on one of the threads.
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15. A computer program product for implementing within a computer system a method for testing a computer program to determine whether the program processes as designed, the computer program product comprising:

computer readable medium for providing computer program code means utilized to implement the method, wherein the computer program code means is comprised of executable code for implementing the steps for:

organizing one or more test cases into a hierarchy;

interfacing a harness with the test cases, wherein the interfacing allows the harness to recognize and execute the test cases; and

traversing the hierarchy to execute one or more test cases on the computer program, wherein the one or more test cases are executed on the computer program regardless of the language or format in which the test cases were written.

16. A computer program product as recited in claim 15, wherein the step for traversing is performed by the harness.

17. A computer program product as recited in claim 15, wherein the step for interfacing is performed by one or more connectors.

18. A computer program product as recited in claim 15, wherein the step for organizing the test cases into a hierarchy includes grouping one or more of the test cases into a test suite.

1 19. A computer program product as recited in claim 18, wherein the step for
2 organizing the test cases into a hierarchy includes grouping one or more test suites into a test
3 module.

4
5 20. A computer program product as recited in claim 15, wherein the one or more
6 test cases executed on the computer program are selected by a user.

7
8 21. A computer program product as recited in claim 20, wherein the step for
9 traversing further includes executing the selected test cases on a thread pool comprising one
10 or more threads.

11
12 22. A computer program product as recited in claim 21, wherein the step for
13 traversing further includes copying a selected test case across all of the one or more threads,
14 and wherein the selected test case is executed across all of the one or more threads.

15
16 23. A computer program product as recited in claim 21, wherein the step for
17 traversing further includes executing one of the selected test case on one of the threads.

1 24. In a computer system that includes a computer program for processing, a
2 program module written in any format or language for testing the computer program, a
3 harness and one or more connectors, a method for testing the developed computer program
4 to determine whether the program processes as designed, the method comprising the acts of:

5 employing one or more connectors to perform the acts of:

6 identifying one or more structural elements from a program module;

7 translating the identified structural elements into a hierarchy, wherein
8 the hierarchy includes one or more series of instructions that test a feature of
9 a computer program, and wherein the hierarchy groups related series of
10 instructions; and

11 interfacing the hierarchy with a harness; and

12 executing the one or more series of instructions on the computer program,
13 wherein the series are selected by a user and executed by the harness, and wherein
14 the selected series of instructions are executed on the computer program regardless
15 of the language or format in which the series were written.

16
17 25. A method as recited in claim 24, wherein the act of executing is performed on
18 a thread pool comprising one or more threads.
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26. A method as recited in claim 25, wherein the act of executing is further performed by executing one of the selected series of instructions on one of the threads.

27. A method as recited in claim 25, wherein the act of executing is further performed by copying each series of instructions across all of the one or more threads, and wherein each series of instructions is executed across all of the one or more threads.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Systems and methods for gathering, organizing and executing test cases irrespective of the language or format employed. Implementation of the present invention takes place in association with a harness that is interposed between a software package to be tested and a program module. Programming code comprising a connector interfaces the harness with the program module in order for the harness to receive a hierarchy that comprises one or more test cases, test suites and/or test modules. The harness traverses the hierarchy and executes test cases selected by a user on the developed software package. Therefore, in accordance with the present invention, individuals testing the software package can select any desired test case format (programming language, machine architecture, operating system, test sequence, etc.) that satisfies the demands of the developed software package, and the harness will gather, organize, and execute the developed test case(s) irrespective of the language or format employed.

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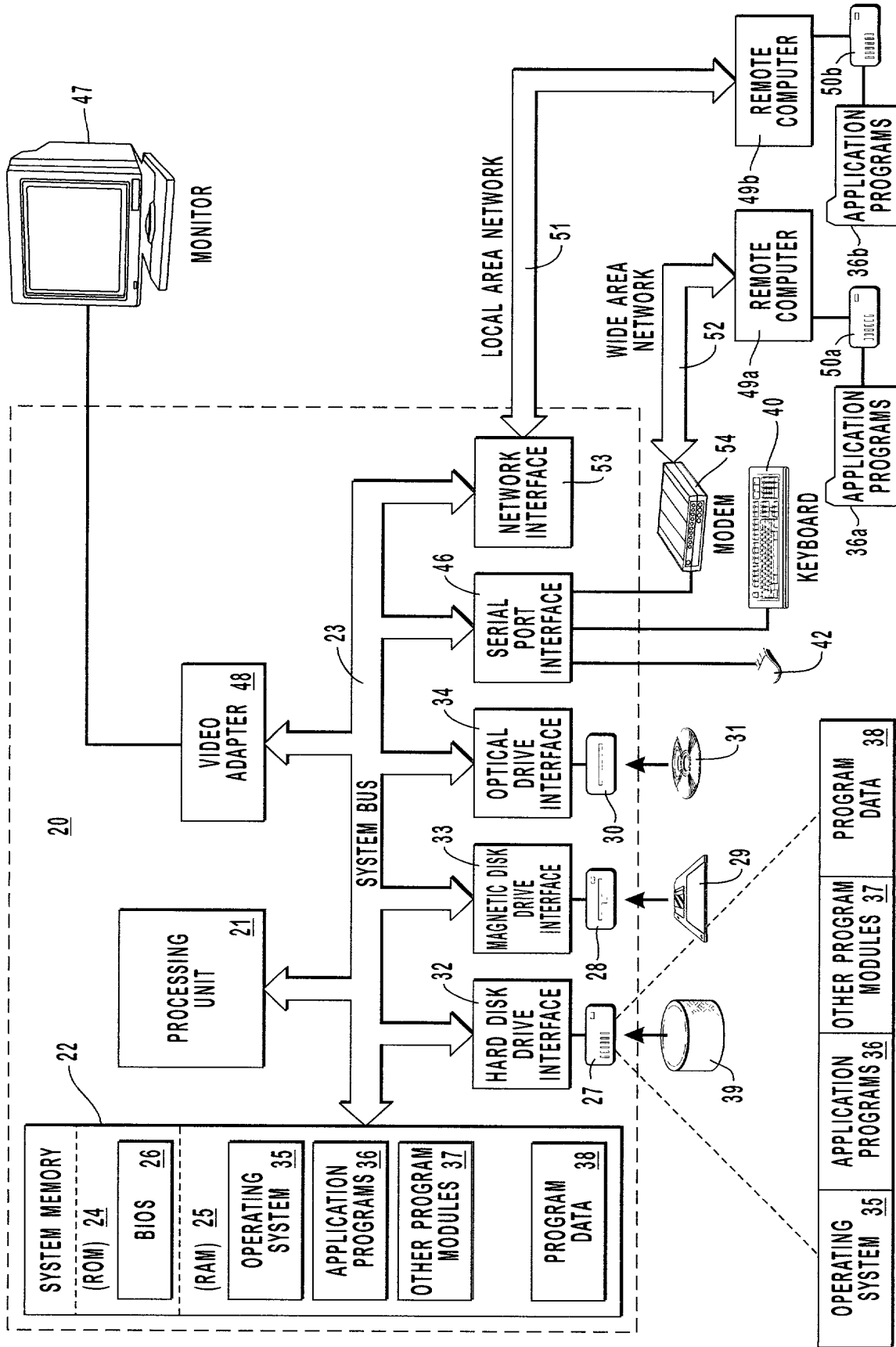


FIG. 1

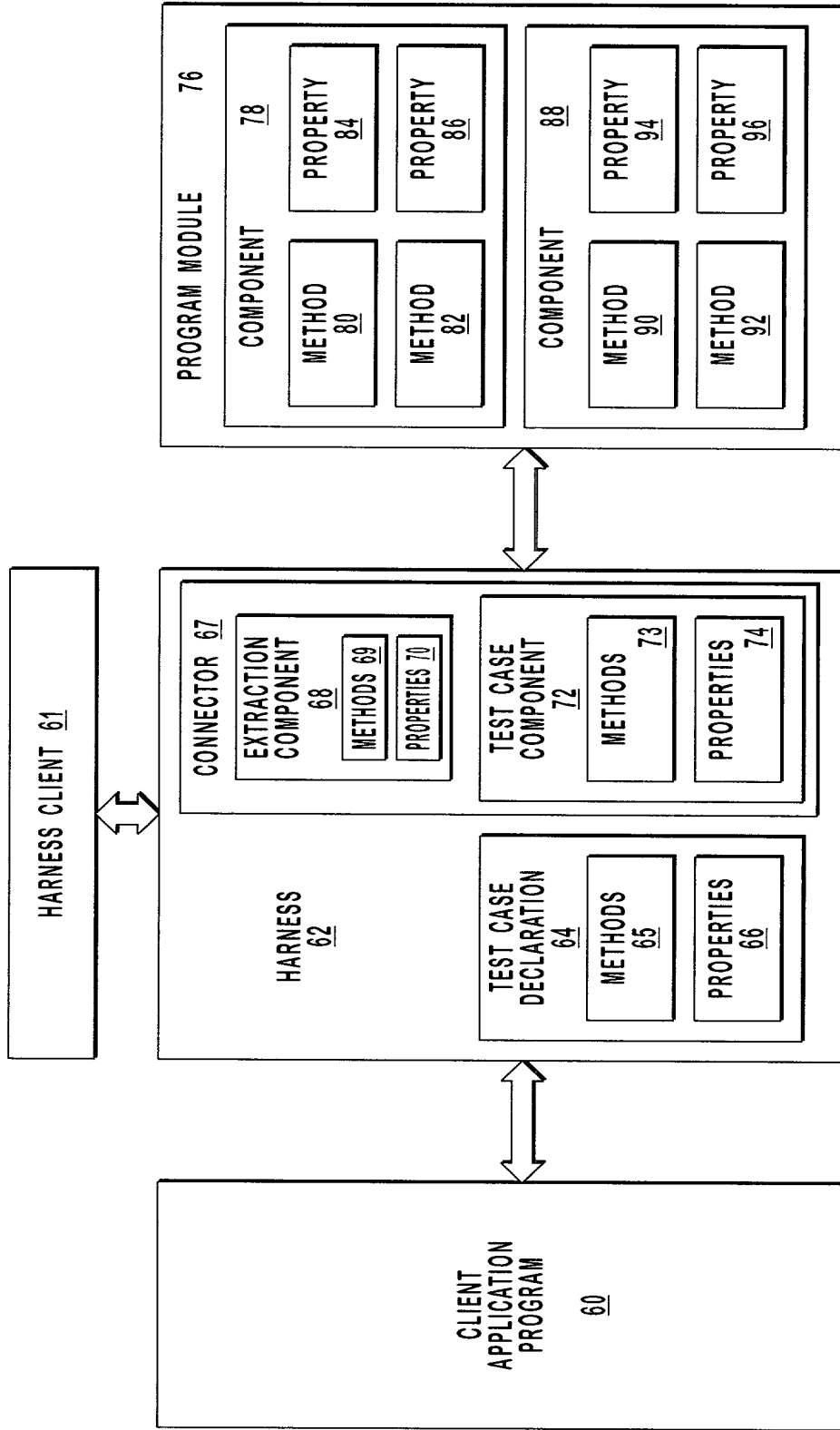


FIG. 2

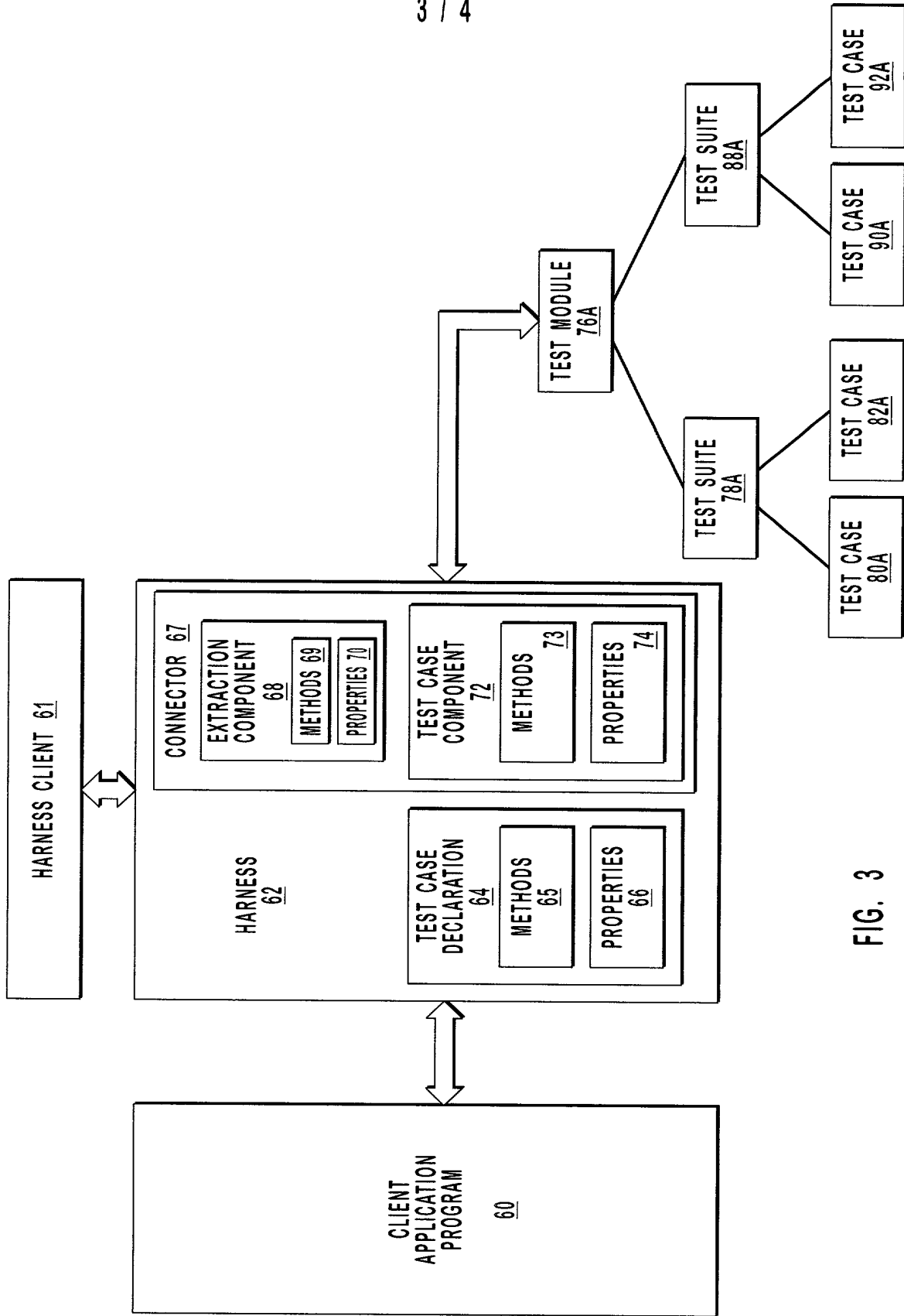


FIG. 3

DISTRIBUTE = FALSE

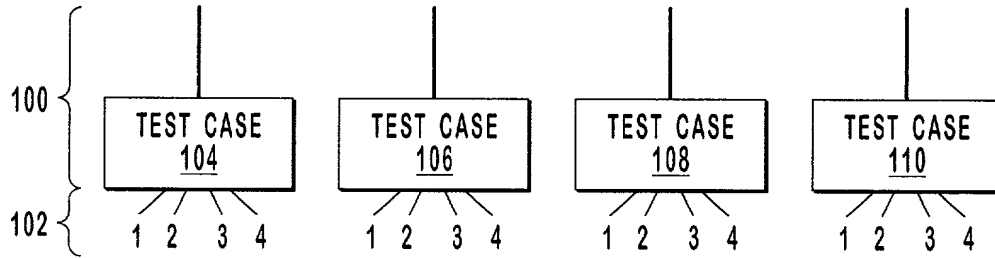


FIG. 4A

DISTRIBUTE = TRUE

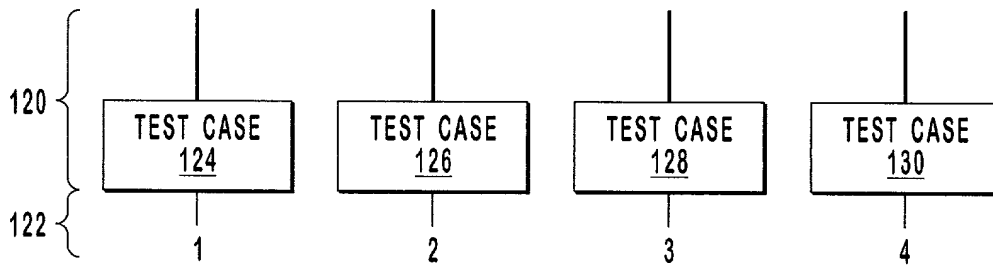


FIG. 4B

DECLARATION, POWER OF ATTORNEY, AND PETITION

We,

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- (4) Name: Frank Truong
Address: 11041 167 CT NE
Redmond, WA 98052
Citizenship: United States of America

declare: that our citizenship, residence address, and post office address are as set forth above; that we verily believe we are the original, first, and joint inventors of the subject matter of the invention or discovery entitled SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR GATHERING, ORGANIZING AND EXECUTING TEST CASES for which a patent is sought and which is described and claimed in the specification attached hereto; that we have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims referred to, and that we acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Section 1.56(a) of Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

We declare further that all statements made herein of our own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful, false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful, false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

We hereby appoint as our attorneys and/or patent agents: RICK D. NYDEGGER, Registration No. 28,651; DAVID O. SEELEY, Registration No. 30,148; JONATHAN W. RICHARDS, Registration No. 29,843; JOHN C. STRINGHAM, Registration No. 40,831; BRADLEY K. DeSANDRO, Registration No. 34,521; JOHN M. GUYNN, Registration No. 36,153; CHARLES L. ROBERTS, Registration No. 32,434; GREGORY M. TAYLOR, Registration No. 34,263; DANA L. TANGREN, Registration No. 37,246; KEVIN B. LAURENCE, Registration No. 38,219; ERIC L. MASCHOFF, Registration No. 36,596; C. J. VEVERKA, Registration No. 40,858; ROBYN L. PHILLIPS, Registration No. 39,330; RICHARD C. GILMORE, Registration No. 37,335; DAVID B. DELLENBACH, Registration No. 39,166; KEVIN K. JOHANSON, Registration No. 38,506; DAVID L. GRIFFIN, Registration No. 44,136; R. BURNS ISRAELSEN, Registration No. 42,685; DAVID R. TODD, Registration No. 41,348; FRASER D. ROY, Registration No. 45,666; CARL T. REED, Registration No. 45,454; JESÚS JUANÓS i TIMONEDA, Registration No. 43,332; STEPHEN D. PRODNUK, Registration No. 43,020; R. PARRISH FREEMAN, JR., Registration No. 42,556; PETER F. MALEN, JR., Registration No. 45,576; ADRIAN J. LEE, Registration No. 42,785; KYLE H. FLINDT, Registration No. 42,539; and ERIC M. KAMERATH, Registration No. 46,081, with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent

and Trademark Office connected therewith. All correspondence and telephonic communications should be directed to:

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WORKMAN, NYDEGGER & SEELEY
1000 Eagle Gate Tower
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Wherefore, we pray that Letters Patent be granted to us for the invention or discovery described and claimed in the foregoing specification and claims, declaration, power of attorney, and this petition.

Dated this 29 day of June, 2000.

Inventor: 

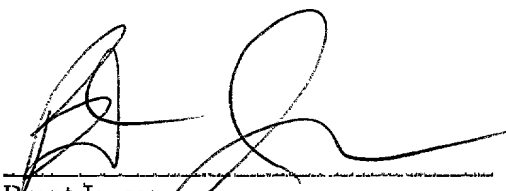
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